

measures to meet these important objectives.

First, I have asked that current negotiations with all the new States on trade, bilateral investment, and tax treaties be expedited and completed as soon as possible. These agreements will provide greater access for our companies, and they will lay a new foundation for our future commercial relationships.

Second, I have also asked OPIC, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Ex-Im Bank, the Export-Import Bank, to negotiate new agreements and expand their operations in the former U.S.S.R., another critical step so that American firms can compete equally and fairly for a share of the new markets there.

And third, I would like to reiterate my call to the Congress in a spirit of bipartisanship to pass, in time for my summit meeting with President Yeltsin in June, the “FREEDOM Support Act,” the landmark legislation that I announced on April 1st. We hope the business leaders here today and the larger American business community will support this bill which will lift cold war restrictions on trade and investment.

And finally, I have requested that our Secretary of Commerce, Barbara Franklin, create new business development committees with Russia, Ukraine, and other countries to eliminate the barriers that currently discourage trade with them.

All these issues will be high on my agenda when I meet with Presidents Kravchuk and Yeltsin. And I’m absolutely committed to giving American companies every oppor-

tunity to compete in these markets. The American private sector should seize this opportunity to do business with these countries. It’s a vast and rich market, and expanding our business ties will benefit the American people.

Increased trade means new markets for American goods, greater opportunities for American investors, and more jobs for American workers. The U.S. increased its exports of manufactured goods to the U.S.S.R. by nearly 40 percent in 1991. We should aim to do even better this year and the next.

This is a defining moment in this century. And indeed, the private sector’s role is absolutely critical. The need for capital, advanced technology, and human expertise in these countries during this decade and into the next century will be far too great for governments alone to meet. A great economic transformation to liberate the peoples of the former Soviet Union and benefit our own people will only occur if our private firms invest and trade to show them the way.

I thank those business leaders that are with us here today, many of them already involved in trying to do business in the C.I.S. countries. And I pledge my commitment to this partnership with the American private sector. And now we will go inside and discuss in detail the agenda that I’ve just outlined. Thank you all very much for being here.

Note: The President spoke at 9:33 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks to the Young Presidents’ Organization

April 21, 1992

Thank you all. Please be seated. I am delighted to be here, and it’s delightful to have this distinguished group of executives here. I want to single out Doug Glant, the international president of YPO, and thank him for honcho-ing this outfit and getting everybody together. Some of you look a little old to be YPO’s, but nevertheless—[*laugh-*

ter—far be it from me to be throwing darts in this way.

But I’d like to briefly talk about some of the issues of concern, certainly of concern to this group but I think of concern to all Americans, but with particular emphasis for the business community. Your creativity and the know-how that I think of when I

think of YPO really are the fuel that creates this country's wealth and provides rewarding and fulfilling jobs for our communities. And the role of Government in free enterprise is to allow this creativity to flourish. And that means growth.

I know we've had a very difficult time here, a far longer slowdown, indeed recession in some corners, than we would have liked. But for the past 3 years we have been trying to promote sensible policies that will help expand businesses and help create jobs. And we're going to continue to fight for a growth agenda. I had to veto some tax legislation recently, but we were pressing at the same time for seven bullet-point pieces of legislation that would have stimulated the economy. I am still hopeful that we can get some of them through this Congress, and I'll mention a couple of them in a minute.

We face a decision here in the White House now on another subject, and that's the participation in the U.N. Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio. The attendance of the U.S. President at the Rio conference would add a major political impetus to that undertaking; there's no question about that at all. The world looks to us for leadership in this field. But it could also commit the United States to a course of action that could dramatically impede long-term economic growth in this country. I am committed to international cooperation to preserve the world's environment. I want to be very clear on that. And that's why I would like to go to the conference. But I am not going to go to the Rio conference and make a bad deal or be a party to a bad deal. I am not going to sign an agreement that does not protect the environment and the economy of this country.

And this is a very important decision. It's an important decision for our environment, and it's a very important decision for our economy. And to play politics with the Rio conference severely undercuts the U.S. position as we try now to assure a world view that will protect the environment and the economy. Negotiations are going on right now to try to accomplish both before I make a decision as to whether or not I will go to Rio. We are going to consider intensely this matter in the days ahead. And

I'm going to let you know soon, let the country know soon of our final decision on my attendance in Rio.

Here at home last week, we had some more heartening news about the United States economy. All around the world, consumers and companies buy American goods and services in ever-greater amounts, despite the sluggish performance of some of their own economies. U.S. exports—I look around this room and I see many who are participating in this—U.S. exports are experiencing a surge, rising 7 percent in February to a one-month record high of almost \$38 billion. And once again, I think in a good sense, American exports, manufacturing exports, are leading the way.

This good news underscores a fundamental truth about our own competitiveness: If we're to succeed economically at home, we must succeed economically abroad. And the evidence is indisputable. Open markets and free trade mean new jobs for American workers and certainly growth for American companies. Over the past four decades, trade-related jobs in our country have grown 3 times faster than overall American job creation.

We must build on this astounding success. And already, over the past 4 years, our exports to Mexico have more than doubled, creating more than 300,000 export-related jobs here at home. And I remember attending a YPO meeting in Mexico about 12 years ago, maybe 14 I think it was, when we were really way behind the power curve in terms of doing business with that country. And they were way behind the power curve in terms of a political situation that would permit the kind of vigorous business that I've just talked about here.

But what we're trying to do now is take that improvement and lock in the gains with what is known as the NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement. With Canada and Mexico, the North American free trade agreement will establish one of the world's largest trading areas, a \$6 trillion market from the Yukon to Yucatan. And that's going to mean hundreds of thousands of new jobs for U.S. workers. Those that are fighting me or fighting us on this concept are saying it will cost jobs. We are

absolutely convinced that a successful conclusion to that trade agreement will create jobs, and I mean good jobs.

Tomorrow, on another field, I'm going to be meeting with Jacques Delors, the President of the EC Commission. And with him will be President Cavaco Silva, an old friend, President of the European Council. He is the Prime Minister of Portugal, as you know. And we're going to be discussing the Uruguay round of the GATT, the world trade negotiations that are so essential to expanding trade for everybody.

Over the next decade, a successful conclusion of that Uruguay round could pump \$5 trillion into the global economy. And the U.S. share of this growth would top \$1 trillion. And no one should doubt our resolve to preserve and expand the worldwide regime of open trade. GATT must be preserved for this reason: American workers and American companies deserve the jobs and opportunities that those open markets offer.

I think these negotiations are going to be tough. They are going to be difficult. But we're approaching them, as we have earlier negotiations, with a positive spirit. We will do our part, but the United States must not be asked to bear the entire burden of compromise when it comes to hammering out a successful conclusion to this GATT round.

There's still much we can do to make America more competitive. And one of our serious economic problems right now—and I won't tell you too much about this, lest you tell me about it—that is the cost of capital. And it's too high. We know that. And that's why we're going to continue to fight for a cut in the capital gains rate, capital gains tax rate. A high cap-gains rate discourages investment and thus business expansion and thus job creation. And it is very clear to most business people that this would be a helpful thing.

Ironically, 2 years ago, in both Houses we had a majority for reducing the capital gains tax. And it was beaten down purely by the political leadership in the United States Senate, keeping us from giving this incentive to American businesses, large and small. I am continuing to fight for this. Some call it a tax break for the rich. I never

believed that in the first place, and I don't believe it now. And we're going to keep fighting to get that stimulative cut in capital gains.

None of our industrial competitors, major industrial competitors, tax capital gains at rates comparable to ours. Germany, as some of you know, Germany doesn't tax them at all. And in Japan, an entrepreneur who sells the company that he's built from scratch pays a tax of one percent. And we are supposed to compete with those vigorous economies with a much higher capital gains rate.

And yet, the very people who complain about America's ability to compete block our effort, every effort to lower the capital gains tax. A lower rate will benefit virtually everyone in America, not only those who run a business but anyone who owns a house or share of stock, seeks a better job. It will help a lot in the agricultural area of this great country of ours, too. So, it's time to stop punishing the pursuit of excellence. And it's time, I think, to cut the tax on capital gains.

We're also working to lighten up the regulatory burden that Washington imposes on every American business. Last January we announced a 90-day moratorium on Federal regulations. Wherever possible, we blocked those regulations that discourage growth and we're accelerating those that encourage growth. So far, the preliminary estimates show that we've saved American business \$10 billion to \$20 billion in regulatory costs.

When new legislation is passed, clearly new regulations are required. I'm thinking of the civil rights legislation that I'm very proud of, the Americans for the Disabilities Act. And yes, it imposed a burden on some, but it was overdue. It's sound legislation. It encourages people to get into the mainstream. And yet, there's been some cost with that one. We renegotiated the Clean Air Act, and that was long overdue. And I think it's good. We tried to use market forces, incidentally, in letting people meet the clean air standards, but nevertheless, that imposed a regulatory burden.

So, now we're trying to move forward and fulfill our responsibilities for safety and all of that but eliminate this movement towards overregulation. And as I say, these

preliminary estimates have been pretty encouraging in terms of the savings in regulatory costs. I'm going to soon be making an announcement about our battle against these excessive regulations, but for now I simply want to say the days of overregulation are just that, they are over. And we are going to stay in there to be sure that independent agencies, whatever they are, people, whoever come in with these excessive regulations are going to have them blocked, if at all possible.

We're pursuing comprehensive reforms in other areas that directly relate to America's long-term competitiveness. We've proposed, for example, market-based health care reform to control the skyrocketing costs and to bring coverage to the uninsured. I do not want to see us lose the quality of health care that we have in this country by going to the "pay or play" plan that's going to break a lot of small businesses, or even worse, to the so-called nationalized plans that have many of our neighbors sending their people over here for care. We are not going to go to that centralized or socialized approach to medicine. And the proposals that we have made, that give people access to insurance and show much greater flexibility in the insurance pool, I believe is the answer to this health care problem.

In another way, another field, through our America 2000 initiative, we are intensifying our efforts to literally revolutionize, reinvent American education. It isn't good enough anymore to simply throw more money at the mandated programs that have failed the young people of this country. And we're not going to do that. And we've gotten the Governors together, set six national education goals, very sensible goals, no partisanship involved in that coming together of the Governors, and now we're moving forward, trying to get this program underway.

Some legislation is required. Fortunately, a lot of legislation is not required, and we can go right to the communities to reinvent the American school. And it's a good program, and I urge you to take a hard look at it because I know that you know that we are going to have to do a better job of education, particularly in math and science, if we're going to be competitive in the year 2000. I think we've got a good

program, and I strongly urge you to give it your support.

Another area that I know is of concern to people here—it is to me—and that is the area of legal reform. We have introduced important steps to reform our legal system, to put an end to the frivolous lawsuits that mire so many businesses and individuals and community activities in a bottomless swamp of litigation. We've got to sue each other less and start helping each other more. And I will continue to fight to get this Congress, hostile Congress in this area, I might say, to at least give an up-or-down vote on reform of the liability system. We haven't even been able to get that. We haven't even been able to get it out of committee, blocked by powerful lobbies up there.

So, here's an area where I know your interests are at stake and an area where I would earnestly solicit your support because we must start capping some of these outrageous settlements that run the cost of business right off the chart, run doctors out of business, and say to Little League coaches, "Hey, you better not take a chance by coaching the Little League or this guy over on third base is going to sue you." And so, we're going to fight this one. But again, it's an area where we need your help.

And the last point is this: The fact is that none of these pressing social problems are going to be solved without the voluntary involvement of individuals and communities. And when I think of YPO and the success that this epitomizes, this organization epitomizes, I think of a thousand Points of Light, and I think of people who, in spite of spending an awful lot of time building and creating jobs for people, they find time to do something in the communities. From the very first day of this administration, we have called on every American to be a Point of Light, to bring hope to the helpless and to help the homeless and to love and care for those who are in need. And it is working. And it isn't a Government program; it is simply encouraging the sense of voluntarism that is in everybody.

Right here in your own organizations are

plenty of examples of what I'm talking about. Gay Mayer, who works with a drug rehabilitation program in his area, has helped more than 100 young adults recover from the ravages of drug abuse to lead productive lives. What one individual has been able to do just by giving of himself. Joe Lobozzo, who spends his Wednesday nights counseling children of alcoholics.

I would like today to challenge all of you to join these men in a movement that is literally transforming our country. It is much more effective than having a mandated specialized program coming out of some subcommittee in the United States House of Representatives. And it is working. It is the best in ourselves. And I urge you to really, really pitch in.

First, I ask you to make your company a Point of Light by personally devoting as much time as you possibly can to community service, encouraging the employees to do the same. This whole concept of mentoring, where businesses reach out and help in this Education 2000 program, is really working around the country. Secondly, you can encourage other leaders to make voluntary service part of their missions as well. And finally, you can work among your vast memberships to help America itself become a Nation with Communities of Light, the concept where an entire community comes together figuring how to solve its own enormous social problems.

I spoke earlier with some of your leaders, Doug and others, and I know that there is support among your members to assume this leadership role. And I know Doug has asked David Weaver, an old friend, to work with each of you to decide how you can all best respond to this challenge.

I am convinced the results will be profound. And urging this, we're not trying to escape the responsibility of the Federal Government. It's something entirely different. It's the concept that Thoreau noticed years ago about the propensity of one American to help another. And we're simply trying to revitalize this, especially in these days of scarce resources and failed centralized mandates.

So, we've got a lot at stake here, including the legacy that we leave our children. We all want a world at peace; strong, whole-

some families; rewarding jobs for all who seek them.

You know, in these days, you hear and I hear mostly about the problems. We've got a lot to be grateful for in this country. Our kids, grandkids in some cases, go to bed at night with far less fear of nuclear war. The world has changed dramatically in the last 3 years, unprecedented changes that nobody would have believed possible.

In the Middle East, ancient enemies are at least talking about peace. South of our border you see the emergence of democracies that none of us would have predicted just 3 or 4 years ago, the solidifying of the democratic way. And you see countries coming to grips with their economic problems. Argentina comes to mind; Mexico, a sterling example of this dramatic change that is taking place around the world.

I spent this morning talking to a group of business people on working with them on what we can do to help democracy along in the C.I.S., the Commonwealth of these Independent States over there, led by Russia and then the Ukraine, with Kravchuk coming here next month and Yeltsin the next. And so, there's an awful lot of change in this world that is good and strong and positive.

And now what we've got to do is take these ideas, and maybe some that you have that I haven't mentioned, bring them to bear on the economic problems so we can regain the growth that is absolutely essential if the United States is going to continue to be the leader in these very important areas.

But you've caught me on an upbeat day, a day that I am confident about the United States leadership. It is only—I might tell you this, and some of you can confirm this from your trips abroad—it is only our country that the others look to now as the undisputed leader of the entire world. So, we've got to fulfill those responsibilities while still trying to do what we can to assist those that are hurting right here at home. And I am confident with your help, with your continued imaginative leadership, that we can do just exactly that.

So, thank you very, very much for coming to the White House. I didn't intend

to give you this much of a lecture, but I'm just—I don't normally have such a high-talented, captive audience. Thank you all very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Statement on Earth Day

April 22, 1992

Earth Day, April 22, is an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to leaving a better quality of life for future generations. But I believe we must make every day Earth Day. A clean environment requires action from both Government and citizens. I believe that we can have both economic growth and a cleaner, safer environment. Sound policies do not force us to choose between the two.

In just 3 years, this administration has:

- Proposed, negotiated, and signed into law a new Clean Air Act that will cut sulfur dioxide emissions in half, reduce toxic air emissions by 90 percent, and clean up smog in cities across America;
- Established a moratorium until at least the next century on oil and gas drilling off the coasts of California, south Florida, Washington, Oregon, and New England;
- Led the world by proposing to phase out CFC's and other ozone-depleting substances by the end of 1995, and taken legislative action to put the U.S. 42 percent ahead of the internationally required phaseout schedule;
- Proposed to add over \$1 billion in new lands to America's parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and recreation lands;
- Won international agreements to prevent hazardous waste from being illegally dumped in developing countries, to ban ivory imports, to ban large-scale driftnet fishing, and to protect Antarctica;
- Increased funding sharply for implementing and enforcing environmental laws (including a 53-percent increase in EPA's operating budget), for Superfund, for cleaning up Federal facilities,

for protecting wetlands habitat, and for parks and recreation;

- Signed an Executive order requiring Federal Agencies, which generate 20 percent of the Nation's solid waste, to recycle paper, plastic, metals, glass, used oil, lead acid batteries, and tires;
- Made polluters pay the cost of cleanup. The Justice Department and EPA have collected more fines and penalties in the first 3 years of this administration than during the previous 18-year history of the EPA.

But our work is not finished. I have called on Congress to take the following actions this year:

- Enact balanced national energy legislation providing for increased energy conservation and environmentally responsible energy production, transmission, and use;
- Establish a U.S. Department of the Environment; and
- Increase budgets for environmental and natural resource programs, as requested in my budget. Last year, Congress cut my budget requests for Superfund and for America the Beautiful, which includes funding for parks, forests, wildlife refuges, outdoor recreation, and our program to plant one billion trees a year across the country.

These measures would build upon our recent progress and provide continuing momentum to achieve what Americans want in the months and years ahead, environmental improvement and economic growth.